

PREFACE.

this collection will be seriously to increase this dangerous tendency, and that many will be content to borrow from the past those forms of beauty which have not already been used up *ad nauseam*. It has been my desire to arrest this tendency, and to awaken a higher ambition.

If the student will but endeavour to search out the thoughts which have been expressed in so many different languages, he may assuredly hope to find an ever-gushing fountain in place of a half-filled stagnant reservoir.

In the following chapters I have endeavoured to establish these main facts,—

First. That whenever any style of ornament commands universal admiration, it will always be found to be in accordance with the laws which regulate the distribution of form in nature.

Secondly. That however varied the manifestations in accordance with these laws, the leading ideas on which they are based are very few.

Thirdly. That the modifications and developments which have taken place from one style to another have been caused by a sudden throwing off of some fixed trammel, which set thought free for a time, till the new idea, like the old, became again fixed, to give birth in its turn to fresh inventions.

Lastly. I have endeavoured to show, in the twentieth chapter, that the future progress of Ornamental Art may be best secured by engrafting on the experience of the past the knowledge we may obtain by a return to Nature for fresh inspiration. To attempt to build up theories of art, or to form a style, independently of the past, would be an act of supreme folly. It would be at once to reject the experiences and accumulated knowledge of thousands of years. On the contrary, we should regard as our inheritance all the successful labours of the past, not blindly following them, but employing them simply as guides to find the true path.

In taking leave of the subject, and finally surrendering it to the judgment of the public, I am fully aware that the collection is very far from being complete: there are many gaps which each artist, however, may readily fill up for himself. My chief aim, to place side by side types of such styles as might best serve

PREFACE.

as landmarks and aids to the student in his onward path, has, I trust, been fulfilled.

It remains for me to offer my acknowledgment to all those friends who have kindly assisted me in the undertaking.

In the formation of the Egyptian Collection I received much valuable assistance from Mr. J. Bonomi, and from Mr. James Wild, who has also contributed the materials for the Arabian Collection, his long residence in Cairo having afforded him the opportunity of forming a very large collection of Cairean Ornament, of which the portion contained in this work can give but an imperfect idea, and which I trust he may some day be encouraged to publish in a complete form.

I am indebted to Mr. T. T. Bury for the plate of Stained Glass. From Mr. C. J. Richardson I obtained the principal portion of the materials of the Elizabethan Collection; from Mr. J. B. Waring, those of the Byzantine, and I am also indebted to him for the very valuable essays on Byzantine and Elizabethan Ornament. Mr. J. O. Westwood having directed especial attention to the Ornament of the Celtic races, has assisted in the Celtic Collection, and written the very remarkable history and exposition of the style.

Mr. C. Dresser, of Marlborough House, has provided the interesting plate No. 8 of the twentieth chapter, exhibiting the geometrical arrangement of natural flowers.

My colleague at the Crystal Palace, M. Digby Wyatt, has enriched the work with his admirable essays on the Ornament of the Renaissance and the Italian periods.

Whenever the material has been gathered from published sources, it has been acknowledged in the body of the work.

The remainder of the drawings have been chiefly executed by my pupils, Mr. Albert Warren and Mr. Charles Aubert, who, with Mr. Stubbs, have reduced the whole of the original drawings, and prepared them for publication.